

BOOK REVIEW

Belton, Peter. 1983. Review of mosquitoes of British Columbia. British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook 41. 189 pp. \$5.00 Canadian.

This excellent little book describes, in simple terms, the mosquito fauna of B.C. Important information such as the biology and morphology of mosquitoes is dealt with adequately, both descriptively and diagrammatically. Simple and workable couplet keys for species identification of adult females and fourth instar larvae, are greatly aided by line drawings, habitat and species descriptions. With a little effort, the most amateur of amateurs could identify all of British Columbia's mosquitoes. The book will be an asset to any mosquito control program, where identification by inexperienced personnel is required.

Introductory sections add interest to the book. The description of the Life Zones of B.C. shows the great diversity of British Columbia's terrain – from rain forest, tidal pools and salt marshes in the west to arid regions in the east, and from arctic and subalpine zones in the north to more temperate ones in the south. With this great climatic and geographic diversity goes a concomitant diversity in the mosquito fauna. Sections about mosquitoes in the culture of The Northwest Coast Indians, the collection and preservation of mosquitoes, and the history of mosquito study and management in B.C. are included, as well as a useful glossary and reference section.

Because the species composition of B.C. is very similar to that of Alberta, the key could be used in Alberta. A total of 46 species in 5 genera occur in B.C. – 33 *Aedes*, 3 *Anopheles*, 3 *Culex*, 6 *Culiseta* and 1 *Mansonia*. In Alberta, 42 species occur in the same 5 genera. Five species occur in Alberta but are absent from the species record of B.C., namely, *Aedes churchillensis*, *Ae. decticus*, *Ae. nigromaculis*, *Ae. schizopinax* and *Culex restuans*. Of these five Dr. Belton has included *Ae. nigromaculis* and *Ae. schizopinax* in the couplet key. The other three species are rare in Alberta and should not prove a problem. The existence of regional morphological variations should be kept in mind, however, when using the key.

I have only two criticisms, firstly the book binding will not survive the great deal of use that such a key will receive; a ring binding would have been more serviceable. And secondly, there is no key to male identification. Although the author does point out that males can be keyed using Carpenter and La Casse, this key is now somewhat out of date. Male identification is somewhat easier, but requires slide preparation in most cases and the use of a compound microscope.

The publication of this book by the British Columbia Provincial Museum is the fortyfirst in what is already an excellent series. I anticipate that Peter Belton has started something that will result in others writing similar pocket books on their local mosquito fauna.

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